

Message Text

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11

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 AID-20 PC-10 DRC-01 /128 W

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FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2524

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 131

E. O. 11652 : XGDS (1)

TAGS : PGOV, ET

SUBJ : NEW CABINET

1. IN TELCON THIS MORNING WITH VICE GOVGEN TESFAIOHANNES BERHE, WHO HAS BEEN NOMINATED TO SERVE IN THE NEW IEG CABINET AS MINISTER OF MINES, HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG HE WOULD REMAIN AT ASMARA AND THAT THIS WOULD DEPEND ENTIRELY UPON THE INSTRUCTIONS HE RECEIVES FROM ADDIS ABABA. HE ADDED THAT HE IS PREPARED TO PROCEED TO ADDIS WITHIN NEXT DAY OR TWO, AND WOULD MAKE APPOINTMENT TO SEE ME PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE.

2. TESFAIOHANNES SAID ONE OF HIS TOP PRIORITIES IN APPROACHING HIS NEW JOB WOULD BE TO ARRANGE FOR BRIEFING IN DEPTH BY EMBASSY AND ESPECIALLY BY TENNECO ON PETROLEUM EXPLORATION IN SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA. HE ADDED THAT IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO FACILITATE AND SPEED-UP PETROLEUM EXPLORATION AS FUNDAMENTAL TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELFARE OF ETHIOPIA.

3. APPOINTMENT OF TESFAIOHANNES TO CABINET REFLECTS BOTH HIS EXCEPTIONAL CAPABILITY AND HIS STATUS AS LEADING ERITREAN POLITICIAN. IT ALSO IS BELIEVED TO REFLECT HIS LONG AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH RAS ASRATE KASSA. TESFAIOHANNES SERVED AS VICE GOVGEN OF ERITREA WHEN ASRATE WAS GOVGEN (ASRATE WAS
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REMOVED AS GOVGEN WHEN MARTIAL LAW WAS DECLARED IN ERITREA

IN DECEMBER 1970).

4. MOST LOCAL OFFICIALS AND INFORMED AND INFLUENTIAL PUBLIC LEADERS HERE ARE GENERALLY PLEASED WITH NEW CABINET. THOSE WHO KNOW ASRATE WELL, INCLUDING PRINCIPAL AGENT WHO HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH HIM BY TELEPHONE, TEND TO BELIEVE THAT HE WAS PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT IN INFLUENCING SELECTION OF NEW PRIME MINISTER AND NEW MINISTER OF DEFENSE TO WHOM HE IS RELATED. SOME BELIEVE THAT ASRATE MAY BE EXPECTED TO FUNCTION COVERTLY IN NATURE OF REGENT, WITH IMPROVED PROSPECTS (DEPENDING UPON EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF NEW GOVERNMENT) OF SUCCEEDING EVENTUALLY AS EMPEROR. HOWEVER, LOCAL INFORMANTS EMPHASIZE DEEP UNCERTAINTY OF FUTURE POLITICAL SCENARIO AND IMPORTANCE OF IMMEDIATE ACTIONS AND DECISIONS BY NEW GOVERNMENT IN EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSING CURRENT PROBLEMS AS BEING SIGNIFICANT TO WHOLE TREND OF FUTURE EVENTS.
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Message Attributes

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30 JUN 2005

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TAGS: PGOV, ET, (BERHE, TESFAIOHANNES)
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